

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 1 April

DfE Information for parents and carers

[DfE information for parents and carers](#) of children at registered childcare providers (including nurseries and childminders), primary and secondary schools and further education colleges.

Guidance for parents and carers: keeping children safe online

As part of the document above there is a section on keeping children safe online. It provides links to online resources that will help support parents and carers in keeping children safe online.

SEN Learning Resources

A second set of resources has been produced - <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/916190/lancashire-send-specialist-teacher-newsletter-no2-april-2020.pdf>

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 2 April

Updated DfE guidance on educational provision over the Easter holidays

Providers are being asked, wherever possible, to maintain provision for children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response and vulnerable children over the Easter holidays. The DfE is asking social workers and schools, wherever possible, to encourage vulnerable children who have a social worker to continue to attend an education setting during the Easter holidays, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk.

Resources and children's guide from the Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner has recently published the following information:

'During the coronavirus pandemic, schools are closed for most children who are, like the rest of us, learning and adjusting to life staying at home. Your child's school and teachers may have supplied teaching materials to you and are possibly carrying out online learning. If that is the case, you should listen to your child's school and follow the lesson plans that are being set as much as possible. This will ensure that your child continues to have a structured day and keeps up with others in their class.'

However, during this time we realise that some parents may want more resources to help keep their child busy, active and learning, so we have compiled a list of handy, free online activities and materials to use at home.'

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/resources/>

'[A children's guide to coronavirus](#) to help explain the situation has also been produced. The guide aims to answer children's questions about coronavirus, tell children how to stay safe and protect other people and how to help them make the best of their time at home.'

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 3 April

The Department for Education (DfE) have issued guidance about a national voucher scheme for pupils eligible for free school meals. The guidance explains what schools should do to make sure eligible pupils have access to free school meals when they are attending and are not attending school.

The Department for Education's chosen supplier for the scheme is Edenred. Further information including **frequently asked questions for parents** is available on the Edenred website -

https://www.edenred.co.uk/Documents/DfE/DfE_FreeSchoolMeals_ParentCarerFAQs.pdf

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 6 April

Free School Meals arrangements over Easter

In a weekend coronavirus crisis press conference, Michael Gove said schools would be able to provide vouchers to vulnerable families over the two-week break, to support household incomes. This is different to the guidance provided previously by the DfE, which stated that FSM vouchers would only be available during term time.

It has today been confirmed by the DfE that schools **can make FSM vouchers available** to families during the school holiday period.

Statutory Assessment guidance

This guidance relates to the cancellation of the 2020 summer exams at GCSE, AS and A level as well as the International GCSE and Baccalaureate qualifications. A letter to students due to take assessment in 2020 explaining how their work will be assessed can be accessed below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877830/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

24/7 parenting resources

Parenting for Lifelong Health provides open-access online parenting resources during COVID-19, working with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the Internet of Good Things, USAID and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

COVID-19 – 24/7 Parenting

Wellbeing and Mental Health helpline

This is now open 24/7 to help people deal with the implications of the coronavirus pandemic on their mental health.

If you need mental health support call 0800 915 4640 or text 'Hello' to 07862 022846 there is more information at www.lscft.nhs.uk/news/814

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 7 April

Free School Meals

The guidance on free school meal support over the Easter holidays was updated today. Schools will be able to issue the national vouchers during the Easter holidays.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): free school meals guidance

Support parents

The Government has published a list of [high-quality resources](#) that parents can consider to support education at home.

The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust

The Trust has put together some [simple and fun activities](#) that require no specialist knowledge from parents or young people, to provide a great way to get involved in Stephen Lawrence Day whilst learning.

All the materials are themed around the small things' individuals can do to make a positive difference and how together we can build stronger communities.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 8 April

SEND Home Learning Resources for schools and parents – issue 3

A third issue of the home learning newsletter for parents and carers of children with special educational needs has been produced, with more suggestions and practical ideas for activities that can be done at home -

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/916373/send-home-learning-no3.pdf>

Guidance for Personal Assistants, PA employers and Direct Payments

Guidance is available to answer common questions raised by people who manage their Direct Payments and Personal Assistants, to ease anxieties around the impact of COVID-19 and to clarify Lancashire County Council's response to requests for PPE, advice on employing family members, receiving payments and

replacement/alternative care. Accessible through different routes: [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Free School Meals

As mentioned yesterday, minor changes were made to the [free school meals guidance for schools](#); including a note that "this support will not cover future holidays". We are aware that families cannot access their entitlement through the national voucher scheme unless the school generates vouchers for them, but are also aware that schools are having problems making the national system work.

Key Workers

[Guidance on the closure of educational settings](#) for schools has been updated to include new groups in the list of key workers: researchers directly involved in C19 work; pharmacists; foreign embassy staff; and parliamentarians and their key staff.

Resources for Home Learning

As noted yesterday, a national list of [online resources for home education](#) offers valuable links to support parents with home-learning, including for English, Maths, Science, PE, Mental Wellbeing and for pupils with SEND.

School Places

The government is working with local authorities to ensure that **Primary National Offer Day** can go ahead as expected on 16 April. Alternative arrangements for **admissions appeals** are also being explored.

Personal Protection Equipment – Crowdfunding

A small team of teachers and pupils at Shuttleworth College in Burnley are taking positive action to address the current shortage of PPE in healthcare settings and care homes. The school has set up a JustGiving page and so far raised over £1,800 to buy raw materials to make visors and other PPE equipment, with any surplus to be donated to local foodbanks. If you wish to contribute to their efforts, please [visit their page](#)

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 9 April

School Places

Schools have been asked to remain open for children who are vulnerable and for those children of key workers critical to the COVID-19 response who absolutely need to attend. If you require a school place, please contact your child's school first, as they are responsible for providing a place either on site or in partnership with another local school.

If your child's school has been forced to close and they are unable to identify an alternative school, please contact your local school admissions team on the numbers below. The County Council has a list of all the schools that remain open and we will contact the nearest school to your home address, on your behalf, to find a place.

Lancaster, Wyre & Fylde: 01524 586417 or 01524 581134

Preston, South Ribble, Chorley & West Lancashire: 01772 531797 or 01772 531859

Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale: 01254 220707 or 01254 220722

Central: 01772 531878

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 10 April

Easter egg distribution

Lancashire Constabulary is working with District Council's across the county today to distribute Easter eggs for families in need through local hubs and food banks.

Library at home service

The [Your library at home](#) service was launched on Monday 6 April. It contains links to some key resources and the new weekly virtual Lego Club. The [BorrowBox library](#) shelves are full with a huge number of new titles and over 50 which are available for simultaneous download, so no waiting!

Educational support for pupils at home

The BBC will be providing daily lessons from 20 April 2020 – expect more on this as we get more information.

Teacher Assessment and Reporting

Although the statutory assessment process will not be taking place and schools won't be reporting nationally, parents will understandably want information on their child's achievements. The DfE will be providing guidance on this very soon.

Admissions

The Primary National Offer Day will take place as expected on 16 April to offer primary school places for September 2020. Alternative arrangements for admission appeals are currently being developed by the DfE and we will update you on these as soon as possible.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 13 April

Adoption Support Fund – DfE Press Release

Adoptive families will be offered emergency support as the Government expands the scope of the Adoption Support Fund to meet needs arising from the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Education Secretary announced that up to £8 million will be available to pay for different types of therapeutic support for families whose adopted children may have already suffered trauma and be made more anxious owing to the uncertainty of the effects of the virus. The press release can be found at: [Adoption support fund scheme](#).

School Complaints

The DfE has clarified that it does not expect schools to handle new or existing complaints whilst they are closed. Complaints can be considered once the government confirms schools can safely reopen. The updated guidance can be found at: [School Complaints Procedures – best practice advice](#)

Free Learning Resources

Free daily audio stories from *The World of David Walliams*:
[Elevenses with David Walliams](#)

The [BookTrust](#) is working hard to keep in touch with children, families and schools. The Charity has developed the [BookTrust Home Time](#) hub for families with children at home; it's packed with reading advice, ideas and resources.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 14 April

Re-opening of Schools

During the Easter period there has been some speculation about the re-opening of schools. Over the weekend it has been confirmed by the DfE that *'there is no deviation from the position that we need to be informed by the science and that the lock-down arrangements have yet to be reviewed'*.

Any re-opening must be properly planned and undertaken in a way that keeps pupils, their families and all school staff safe.

Free School Meals – National Voucher System

We are aware that some schools have continued to experience a range of difficulties with the newly introduced national FSM voucher system, particularly in relation to accessing the website and delays in authorising applications.

We continue to share these concerns with the DfE on behalf of families experiencing difficulties obtaining or using the vouchers.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 15 April

Primary National Offer Day

Tomorrow is the day that parents are informed about primary school places in September 2020 for their children.

Late yesterday the DfE published new guidance about school admissions, making clear that parents' still have the right to appeal to any school which has refused their child a place. If you applied for a place at a school that was refused and may be considering appealing the decision, here is the guide for [parents and guardians](#).

The DfE are making regulatory changes that, subject to legislation, **will come into force on 24 April 2020**. The new regulations will relax some of the current requirements in the [School Admission Appeals Code 2012](#) and enable admission authorities to proceed with their admission appeals.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 16 April

Consultation on Exceptional Arrangements for Exam Grading in 2020

Following the cancellation of summer 2020 exams, [this consultation](#) seeks views on exactly how exam grades will be awarded to young people who expected to sit GCSEs, AS and A levels this summer.

This is likely to be of interest to teachers, parents or carers of the students affected, college and university admissions staff and training providers making offers to students based on the grades they receive and to employers receiving job applications from students affected.

There is a very short timescale to respond, closing on 29th April.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 17 April

Library Service - Borrow Box

The Lancashire Library Service has a catalogue of books can also be accessed [here](#). This includes e-books on bereavement:

[Coping with Bereavement](#)
[Grief Works \(eAudio\)](#)
[Grief Works \(eBook\)](#)

Public Health England – e-Bug Project

The [e-Bug project](#) led by Public Health England has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene.

DfE update on closure of educational settings

The update [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Closure of educational settings: information for parents and carers](#) includes a new question on Admissions, along with information about resources and support

This includes support for parents with home learning including, news about the BBC daily lessons starting next week and suggestions for parents with children under 5 years old: [online educational resources](#). More ideas can be found on the BBC [Tiny Happy People campaign](#) and [National Literacy Trust Family Zone](#).

Healthy Young Minds

In Lancashire and South Cumbria Healthy Young Minds is providing a variety of advice, guidance and support related to children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing: healthyyoungmindslsc.co.uk
The DfE also has [guidance on supporting children's wellbeing and mental health](#)

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 20 April

What parents and carers need to know about schools and education during the coronavirus out break? (updated 19 April 2020)

The guidance has been updated to provide the information about on online resources and remote learning referred to over the weekend during the televised government briefing. This includes:

- [a list of online educational resources](#) identified by educational experts to help pupils to learn at home
- provision from the BBC to include daily lessons starting from 20 April 2020.

The full document can be found at:

[What parents and carers need to know about schools and education during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for schools and other educational settings

(updated 19 April 2020)

The guidance has been updated to add [SEND risk assessment guidance](#) for special schools, specialist colleges, local authorities and any other settings managing children and young people with complex special educational needs and disability (SEND).

It advises local authorities to conduct risk assessments in collaboration with educational settings and parents; particularly for children and young people whose need for hands-on care or whose behaviours mean that there are more, or more nuanced, risks to be managed than for the majority of children and young people with EHC plans.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 21 April

Community hubs

These have been set up in each district of Lancashire to help support families most in need during the COVID19 outbreak. The virtual hubs are available for those who are may be vulnerable due to age, health factors or through self-isolation.

They are operated by local authorities with the voluntary, community and faith sector, offering a range of support, including help with shopping, obtaining food parcels, collecting prescriptions, tackling loneliness, advice about finance, debt and housing. The links to each community hub can be [found here](#).

Free school meal eligibility

During the COVID19 outbreak the eligibility for free school meals is being temporarily extended to include some groups who have no access to public funds.

The [guidance for the temporary extension of free school meals eligibility to NRPF groups](#) provides more information.

The eligibility criteria and an application for free school meals can be found at [apply for free school meals](#).

Digital devices for disadvantaged and vulnerable children

Following the announcement on Sunday about access to digital devices local authorities and school trusts are expecting guidance today about placing orders online. Schools, parents and pupils will not be able to order the devices.

When children are working remotely it is important for parents and carers to be aware of what they are being asked to do, including the sites they are using and which school staff they are working with.

Here are a few of the resources that can be used to help keep children safe online:

- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations
- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 22 April

Information, guidance and support for parents and carers

Parents are not expected to act as teachers, or to provide the activities and feedback that a school or nursery would. They should do their best to help children and support their learning while dealing with competing demands.

Advice on how education can continue at home for children can be found at:

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- [aged 2-4](#)
-

-
- [at primary school](#)
 - [with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\)](#)
-

Parents of secondary school aged children are advised to contact their school for guidance, with advice from the DfE expected soon. Alongside work provided by the school, parents can use the [online educational resources](#) covering various subjects and age groups.

The BBC has also developed [Bitesize Daily](#) every weekday for pupils in Year 1 to Year 10. Content is free on the television, online and through BBC iPlayer.

Using the Free School Meals vouchers

Aldi joins supermarkets signed up to Government's national voucher scheme
[Aldi joins Free School Meal voucher scheme](#)

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 23 April

Home learning ideas for pupils with Special Educational Needs

This is the fourth bulletin from the Lancashire Specialist Teacher Service with suggestions and practical ideas of activities to do with your children at home.
[SEND Resource](#)

Free School Meals Information

Many schools and parents continue to be concerned about the impact of coronavirus on those children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM). Parents may find the following summary and frequently asked questions prepared for the media helpful: [Free School Meals & Covid-19 FAQ](#)

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 24 April

Information for parents and carers about educational provision

The sections on school closures, transport, vulnerable children, critical workers and resources. The information about the Easter holidays has been removed.
[What parents and carers need to know about schools and education during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Delays to DfE's free laptop application process

The launch of the application process for the DfE's free laptop scheme has been delayed. In guidance published on Sunday, the DfE advised that schools, trusts and local authorities would be able to place online orders for devices for eligible pupils from Wednesday 22 April 2020.

The DfE has now stated that the order facility will be available in the coming days. Locally we have been collating information about those young people who will be eligible for devices, so that we can submit the order for Lancashire as soon as the arrangements are provided.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 27 April

School Admission Appeals

Local Authorities and other admission bodies received updated guidance from the DfE on Friday afternoon about admission appeals. This guidance is now being considered and more information on the local arrangements will follow this week.

Technology support for children and schools

New guidance for schools and colleges about how to get internet access, digital devices and support to provide remote education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) was also received from the DfE on Friday afternoon. This guidance is also being considered and more information on the local arrangement will follow this week.

Providing Free School Meals

A link has been added to the site on free meals in further education, along with information about Aldi joining the national voucher scheme.

[Providing free school meals during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
